

ETHNIC CHANGES
IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE
IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

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THE Byzantine Empire was never in its long history a true national state with an ethnically homogeneous population. It is true that the conquests of the Arabs in the seventh century deprived the empire of great numbers of non-Greek-speaking elements and gave to it an aspect which appeared to be more Greek than had been the case before. Egypt and Syria, where a national consciousness and a literature in the native languages had begun to develop, were lost; so also was Africa with its Latin and Punic-speaking population. There remained Asia Minor, parts of the Balkan peninsula, the islands of the Aegean, including Crete, certain regions of Italy, and Sicily. Here the Greek-speaking elements were strong, but the ethnic homogeneity which they suggest was more apparent than real.

Let us first look at Asia Minor. No doubt, under Hellenistic and Roman domination, the native population of that very important peninsula had been deeply affected by Hellenism, but neither in language nor in culture, particularly in the isolated regions of the back country, was the victory of Hellenism complete.¹ The evidence for this is scattered and largely circumstantial, but it is unmistakable. The native languages survived long into the Christian era. We know that Phrygian, which in the first three centuries of our era witnessed a true renaissance,² was still spoken in the sixth century.³ The same was true of Lycaonian.⁴ Celtic, which, according to Jerome,⁵ was heard in Galatia in the fourth century, survived until the end of the fifth and probably beyond. So we may infer from a hagiographical text concerning a posthumous miracle of St. Euthymius, who died in 487. According to this text a Galatian monk who had lost his speech was cured by the saint, but at first he could

¹ For example, in the sixth century the city of Tralles was thoroughly Greek-speaking, but the back country was hardly impregnated by Hellenism, as is shown by the fact that it still remained predominantly pagan. Agathias, *Historiae* (Bonn, 1838), 102; E. W. Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini historiae ecclesiasticae pars tertia*, CSCO (Louvain, 1936), 81, 125 (English trans. R. Payne Smith [Oxford, 1860], 159, 230).

² W. M. Calder, "Corpus Inscriptionum Neo-Phrygiarum," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 31 (1911), 161-215; 33 (1913), 97-104; 46 (1926), 22 ff. On page 164 of volume 31 Calder writes: "The existence of over sixty inscriptions of which no two are exactly alike, and all of which exhibit intelligent syntactical variation, is sufficient proof that Phrygian was not a moribund language surviving in a few fixed formulae, but was the everyday language of the uneducated classes at the period to which the texts belong." For a map indicating the Phrygian-speaking zone in Asia Minor about A. D. 250 see W. M. Calder, ed., *Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua*, VII: *Monuments of Eastern Phrygia* (Manchester, 1956), xlv. For a corpus consisting of the Neo-Phrygian inscriptions published up to 1928 see J. Friedrich, *Kleinasiatische Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin, 1932), 128-140. Cf. Calder's remarks, *Monuments of Eastern Phrygia*, p. xxvii.

³ *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 31, 165; Karl Holl, "Das Fortleben der Volkssprachen in Kleinasien in nachchristlicher Zeit," *Hermes*, 43 (1908), 248. We are told concerning an Arian bishop Selinas that his father was a Goth, his mother a Phrygian, and that for this reason he used both languages. He also preached in Greek. Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V. 23. Migne, *PG*, 67. 648; Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica*. VII.16. Migne, *PG*, 67.1468.

⁴ Life of St. Martha, *Acta Sanctorum*, May, V, 413C. Cf. Holl, *op. cit.*, 243-246. For the use of Lycaonian at the time of St. Paul, *Acts of the Apostles*, 14, 11.

⁵ Jerome, *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas* II, 3 (Migne, *PL*, 26. 357). Cf. F. Stähelin, *Geschichte der kleinasiatischen Galater*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1907), 104; W. M. Ramsay, *A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York, 1900), 145-164; J. G. C. Anderson, "Exploration in Galatia cis Halym," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 19 (1899), 316-318.

speak only in his native tongue.⁶ The continuous use of Mysian is also attested. We are told about St. Auxentius, who lived during the first half of the fifth century, but whose biography was written at the beginning of the sixth century, that, as he had come from Mysia, he was barbarian in language.⁷ In Cappadocia the native language continued to prevail certainly throughout the fourth century, as we learn from Gregory of Nyssa⁸ and also from Basil, who says that the Cappadocians were saved from a certain heresy because "the grammatical structure of their native tongue did not permit the distinction between 'with' and 'and.'"⁹ In Cappadocia, too, there lived a people known as the Magusaeans, who scandalized the Christians by the tenacity with which they adhered to their strange practices, including marriage between brother and sister.¹⁰ In Isauria also the native tongue continued to be used. The evidence for this is a hagiographical text written after 596.¹¹

I have found no evidence later than the sixth century attesting the persistence of native languages in Asia Minor. The chances are, however, that these languages, at least some of them, continued to be used long beyond the chronological limits of our evidence, for languages do not die out overnight. The Phrygians, for instance, as we may infer from what we know of the background of Michael II, seem to have been only semi-Hellenized as late as the beginning of the ninth century. Michael, who is described as coarse, ill-educated, and contemptuous of Hellenic culture, was no doubt typical of the natives of Phrygia, many of whom may not have known any Greek at all.¹² We may suppose, then, with some reason, that there was no complete linguistic homogeneity in Asia Minor in the seventh century. This supposition is strengthened by the persistence of the native heresies, known from both ecclesiastical writers and epigraphy.¹³ Montanism was widespread in Phrygia, Lycaonia, and perhaps also in Cappadocia, Galatia, and Cilicia.¹⁴ Procopius states that

⁶ A. H. M. Jones, *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford, 1937), 122.

⁷ *Vita S. Auxentii*, Migne, *PG*, 114. 1428; Holl, *op. cit.*, 241 f.

⁸ *Contra Eunomium*, Migne, *PG*, 45. 1045.

⁹ *De Spiritu Sancto*, Migne, *PG*, 32. 208.

¹⁰ Saint Basil, *The Letters*, ed. and tr. Roy J. Deferrari, 4 (Cambridge, Mass., 1939) (Loeb Classical Library), 44-46; Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica*, ed. E. H. Gifford (Oxford, 1903), 1:352 (book VI, chap. 10).

¹¹ Holl, *op. cit.*, 243. In Cilicia, too, the native language was spoken at least until the fifth century. We are told by Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, that an ascetic whom he knew personally spoke Greek though he was Cilician by race. We may infer from this that there were natives in Cilicia who did not speak Greek. Theodoret, *Religiosa Historia*, Migne, *PG*, 82. 1488.

¹² Theophanes Continuatus, (Bonn, 1838), 49. Cf. J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I* (London, 1912), 78.

¹³ W. M. Calder, "The Epigraphy of the Anatolian Heresies," *Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay* (Manchester, 1923), 59-91. For evidence of the persistence of some of the ancient heresies of Asia Minor as late as the seventh decade of the ninth century see C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople. English Translation, and Commentary* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 279-282; 288-289. Photius speaks further (289) of "the ungodly ideas of those half-barbarous and bastard clans which had crept into the Roman government." The reference no doubt is to the iconoclasts whom apparently Photius did not consider completely Hellenized. Cf. Mango's note (289, note 16).

¹⁴ G. Bardy, "Montanisme," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 10 (1929), 2368, for the early period. For a Montanist inscription of the sixth century see H. Grégoire, "Du nouveau sur la hierarchie de la secte montaniste d'après une inscription grecque trouvée près de Philadelphie en Lydie," *Byzantion*, 2 (1925), 329-336.

the Montanists in Phrygia destroyed themselves rather than abandon their heresy,¹⁵ but the evidence is that they continued to exist. They are mentioned in the Acts of the Council in Trullo (692), in which they are called *Phryges*. The same Acts refer to other heresies in Asia Minor, especially in Galatia, as being numerous, and mention some, all of long standing, by name.¹⁶ Montanists are known to have existed during the reign of Leo III.¹⁷ We also know that early in the ninth century the Paulician Sergius Tychikos corresponded with a certain Leo the Montanist.¹⁸ The reference to this correspondence is rather significant, for it indicates that the Montanists, who henceforth cease to appear in history, may have merged with the Paulicians.¹⁹ This would explain the apparent increase in the strength of the Paulicians in Phrygia and the consequent apprehensive attitude toward them of the ecclesiastical and imperial authorities of Constantinople.²⁰ Some of the Montanists may have merged with the Athinganoi, another strange sect of considerable importance both in Phrygia and Lycaonia.²¹ Michael II is said to have inherited from his parents the beliefs of the Athinganoi, and Nicephorus I was accused of being friendly to both them and the Paulicians.²² Early in the ninth century the Athinganoi were either exterminated or driven out of their homes, and some of them were settled on the island of Aegina where the natives referred to them as aliens.²³ This attitude toward them does not prove that their language was not Greek, since the term alien could very well have been applied to newly established settlers from another province. The fact, however, that the Gypsies, descendants of the foreign Zatt who had been settled in the Empire in 855, came to be called Athinganoi may indicate that the latter were distinguished by their strange language.²⁴

There is some basis for believing, therefore, that in the seventh century

¹⁵ Procopius, *Anecdota*, XI. 14; XI. 23.

¹⁶ Mansi, XI:984 (Canon 95).

¹⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, I (Leipzig, 1883), 401. For other texts, J. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire* (Athens, 1939), 91-92.

¹⁸ H. Grégoire, "Précisions géographiques et chronologiques sur les Pauliciens," *Académie royale de Belgique: Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, 5^e Sér., 33 (Brussels, 1947), 317.

¹⁹ Cf. F. C. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church in Armenia* (Oxford, 1898), LXXIV; CLXXXV. Grégoire, *ibid.*, 301. There is some evidence to the effect that a community of Cathari continued to exist in Philadelphia, Lydia, as late as the thirteenth century. Grégoire, "Cathares d'Asie Mineure, d'Italie et de France," *Mémorial Louis Petit* (= *Archives de l'Orient chrétien*, I) (Paris, 1948), 144-145.

²⁰ Ignatius, *Vita Nicephori*, ed. C. de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig, 1880), 158-159.

²¹ Theophanes, I:495; Genesius, *Historia* (Bonn, 1834), 32; Theophanes Continuatus, 42. On the Athinganoi one may further consult Joshua Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect: the Athinganoi," *The Harvard Theological Review*, XXIX, 2 (1936), 93-106.

²² Theophanes Continuatus, 42; Theophanes, I:488. Jews also are known to have existed in Asia Minor, as in Constantinople, but they do not appear to have been very numerous. Starr, *The Jews in the Byzantine Empire*, 88ff., 98f.; A. Sharf, "Byzantine Jewry in the Seventh Century," *BZ*, 48 (1955), 111.

²³ *The Life of Saint Athanasia of Aegina, Acta Sanctorum, August*, III, 170E.

²⁴ M. J. De Goeje, *Mémoires d'histoire et de géographie orientale*, no. 3. *Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie* (Leiden, 1903), 75. On the ancestry of the gypsies one may consult, in addition to the work of De Goeje, A. A. Vasiliev-H. Grégoire, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I (Brussels, 1935), 223-224; J. B. Bury, *op. cit.*, 40, note 1.

there still remained certain elements of the ancient native population of Asia Minor that had not been completely absorbed by Hellenism, either in language or in culture. But this point should not be too greatly stressed. The native elements were finally absorbed, though perhaps they retained some of their own traits. The administration, the army, the schools, but above all the official Church, with its insistence upon orthodoxy and its use of Greek, were powerful agents of Hellenization. The events of the seventh century, too, may have strengthened Hellenism in Asia Minor. We know that many Christians, the majority of whom were doubtless Greek-speaking, fled from Syria and Egypt when these territories were conquered by the Arabs.²⁵ We do not know exactly where they settled, though it is more than likely that many of them settled in Asia Minor. However, the settlement of new peoples, some of whom, notably the Slavs, will be mentioned in the course of this paper, was to complicate the ethnic composition of Asia Minor.²⁶

One of the most important developments in the Byzantine Empire toward the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh was the rise to prominence of the Armenians. They were to maintain this position throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, while in the ninth and tenth centuries they improved it even further.

At the end of the sixth century the Byzantine Empire controlled the major part of Armenia,²⁷ but the events of the seventh century, in particular the rise of the Arabs, deprived it of this control,²⁸ though it still retained some Armenian-speaking lands. It was from these lands that the Empire drew its Armenian recruits, but many Armenians who entered its service also came from the Armenian regions under foreign control. Sometimes they came as

²⁵ P. K. Hitti, *Origins of the Islamic State* (New York, 1916), 180: "In the year 49 the Greeks left for the seacoast"; 194: They (the Greeks of Tripoli) "wrote to the king of the Greeks asking for relief through reinforcement or ships on which they might escape and flee to him. Accordingly, the king sent them many ships which they boarded in the night time and fled away." 195: "He [a certain Greek patrician] made his way together with his followers to the land of the Greeks"; 189: "The fact is that when Damascus was taken possession of, a great number of its inhabitants fled to Heraclius, who was then at Antioch, leaving many vacant dwellings behind that were later occupied by the Moslems"; 227: "At last they [the people and soldiers of Antioch] capitulated, agreeing to pay poll tax or evacuate the place. Some of them did leave; but others remained, and to the latter Abu-Ubaidah guaranteed safety, assessing one *dinar* and one *jarib* [of wheat] on every adult"; 231 f: "When the Moslem armies reached these towns [the Greek towns of Syria], their inhabitants capitulated, agreeing to pay poll tax or evacuate the place. Most of them left for the Byzantine Empire"; 348: "Some of its [Alexandria's] Greek inhabitants left to join the Greeks somewhere else." Hitti's book is a translation of the *Futuh al-Buldan* of al-Buladhuri.

²⁶ We may mention, for instance, the Goths who, in the early centuries of the Empire, were settled in Bithynia, in the territory which later formed the theme of Optimati. They were still there in the eighth century, though they seem to have been Hellenized. Theophanes, I:385; "Acta Graeca SS. Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii" *Analecta Bollandiana*, 18 (1899), 256. Alans seem to have settled in the Pontic regions of the Empire sometime between 662 and 666. P. Peeters, "A propos de la version arménienne de l'historien Socrate," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*, 2 (Brussels, 1934), 669, note 2. Vandals were settled in Asia Minor by Justinian. Procopius, *De bello Vandalico*, II 14, 17.

²⁷ Under the Emperor Maurice the Byzantine frontier in Armenia followed a line extending from Nisibis to lake Van, Maku, Dvin, Garni, and Tiflis. Nisibis, Maku, Dvin, Garni, and Tiflis did not belong to the Empire. P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, 1 (Paris, 1951), 290-295; cf. Ernst Honigsmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071* (Brussels, 1935), 27 ff.

²⁸ The Arab domination of Armenia was established in the second half of the seventh century. H. Manandean, "Les invasions arabes en Arménie," *Byzantion*, 18 (1946-1948), 190.

adventurers, but more often as refugees. Thus in 571, following an unsuccessful revolt against the Persians, the Armenian Catholicos, a few bishops and numerous noblemen fled to Constantinople.²⁹ The leading men among these refugees, were, besides the Catholicos, Vardan Mamiconian and his retinue. There were also among them some Iberians (Georgians), headed by one Gorgonis, who had joined the Armenians in their unsuccessful revolt.³⁰ Vardan joined the Byzantine army; the rest seem to have settled in Pergamum, where an Armenian colony is known to have existed in the seventh century. From this colony sprang Bardanes who, under the name of Philippicus, occupied the imperial throne from 711 to 713.³¹ More Armenians immigrated after Armenia had fallen into the hands of the Arabs. Thus, about 700 a number of Nakharars with their retinues sought refuge in the Byzantine Empire, and were settled by the emperor on the Pontic frontier. Some of these later returned to Armenia but others remained.³² More Nakharars, completely abandoning their possessions in Armenia, fled to the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Constantine V Copronymus.³³ Still more came about 790. It is said they numbered 12,000, and they came with their wives, their children, their retinues and their cavalry. They were welcomed by the Emperor and were granted fertile lands on which to settle.³⁴ We are not told the location of the lands given to them. This Armenian immigration to the Byzantine Empire was to continue in the centuries to come.³⁵

The Armenians, however, did not always come willingly. They were sometimes forcibly removed from their homes and settled in other regions of the Empire. Justinian had already resorted to this measure, but the numbers involved were small, perhaps a few families.³⁶ Transplantations on a large

²⁹ John of Ephesus, trans. Smith, 125–126, Brooks, 61–62; Theophanes, I:245.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Smith, 403, Brooks, 231–232; Theophanes of Byzantium, *Fragments* (Bonn, 1829), 485.

³¹ H. Gelzer, "Pergamon unter Byzantinern und Osmanen," *Abhandlungen der Königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin, 1903), 42 f. Another Armenian colony may have existed at Pidra in the Anatolikon theme. It is known that Leo V, the Armenian, had immigrated there as a boy. Theophanes Continuatus, 6; Genesis, 10, 28. The exact location of Pidra is not known.

³² Ghevond, *Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des Arabes en Arménie*, tr. from Armenian by G. V. Chahnazarian (Paris, 1856), 22, 33–34; cf. J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886* (Paris, 1919), 184, note 4; J. Muyltermans, *La domination arabe en Arménie...* (Paris, 1927), 98–99.

³³ Ghevond, 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 162. In reporting this incident Asoghik deplores the fact that, whereas the nobility was able to flee, the poor had to stay and serve the Arabs. Stephen (Asoghik) of Taron, *Histoire universelle* (1^e partie), tr. from Armenian by E. Dulaurier (Paris, 1883) (*Publications de l'École des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, XVIII), 162.

³⁵ Mention should also be made of the Armenian Paulicians who were driven out of their homes some time before 661 and some of whom settled in the Pontic regions of the Empire, more specifically in the area at the junction of the Iris and Lycus rivers. Their settlements extended almost as far as Nicopolis (Enderes) and Neocaesarea (Niksar). These were regions where the Armenian element was already considerable. Comana, for instance, is referred to by Strabo (12, 3, 36) as an emporium of the Armenians. Cf. Grégoire, "Précisions géographiques et chronologiques sur les Pauliciens," 294 f., 298 f.; S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge, 1947), 34. Our source for the expulsion of the Paulicians from Armenia is a discourse of the Catholicos John of Odsun (717–728). This event is said to have taken place during the Catholicate of Nerses who is apparently Nerses III (641–661). Grégoire, *op. cit.*, 300. The discourse of John of Odsun is also cited by Sirarpie der Nersessian, "Une apologie des images du septième siècle," *Byzantion*, 17 (1944–45), 70–71.

³⁶ Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, III 32, 7; cf. R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris, 1947), 242. Grousset's statement concerning vast transfers of Armenians to Thrace by Justinian is not borne out by his references.

scale took place during the reigns of Tiberius and Maurice. In 578 10,000 Armenians were removed from their homes and settled on the island of Cyprus.³⁷ "Thus," says Evagrius, "land, which previously had not been tilled, was everywhere restored to cultivation. Numerous armies also were raised from among them, and they fought resolutely and courageously against the other nations. At the same time every household was completely furnished with domestics, because of the easy rate at which slaves were procured."³⁸

A transplantation on a vaster scale was planned by Maurice, and partially carried out. Maurice, who may have been of Armenian descent, though this is extremely doubtful,³⁹ found the Armenians extremely troublesome in their own homeland. The plan which he conceived called for the cooperation of the Persian king in the removal from their homes of all Armenian chieftains and their followers. According to Sebeos, Maurice addressed the Persian king as follows: The Armenians are "a knavish and indocile nation. They are found between us and they are a source of trouble. I am going to collect mine and send them to Thrace; send yours to the East. If they die there, it will be so many enemies that will die; if, on the contrary, they kill, it will be so many enemies that they will kill. As for us we shall live in peace. But if they remain in their country, there will never be any quiet for us." Sebeos further reports that the two rulers agreed to carry out this plan, but apparently the Persians failed to cooperate. For when the Byzantine Emperor gave the necessary orders and pressed hard for their execution, many Armenians fled to Persia.⁴⁰ The Byzantines, however, did carry out the deportation, though only in part. In ordering this removal, Maurice's real motive was, no doubt, the fact that he needed the Armenians as soldiers in Thrace.

Further deportations and settlement of Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, especially in Thrace, are attested for the eighth century. During the reign of Constantine V Copronymus thousands of Armenians and monophysite Syrians were gathered by the Byzantine armies during their raids in the regions of Germanicea (Marash), Melitene, and Erzeroum, and were settled in Thrace.⁴¹ Others, also from the environs of Erzeroum, were settled along the eastern frontier. These, however, were subsequently seized by the Arabs and were settled by them in Syria.⁴² During the reign of Leo IV, a Byzantine raiding

³⁷ Theophylactus Simocatta, *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1887), 143; John of Ephesus, Smith, 412, 437, Brooks, 236, 252. Cf. Honigsmann, *op. cit.*, 23.

³⁸ Evagrius Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898), 215. The translation is taken from the English version of Evagrius which appeared in Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library: Theodoret and Evagrius, *History of the Church* (London, 1854), 444.

³⁹ N. Adontz has tried to prove the Armenian origin of Maurice: "Les légendes de Maurice et de Constantin V, empereurs de Byzance," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*, 2 (Brussels, 1934), 1-12. But see Goubert, *op. cit.*, 36-41.

⁴⁰ Sebeos, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. from Armenian by F. Macler (Paris, 1904), 30-31. Cf. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, I (Munich, 1924), p. 13, no. 108.

⁴¹ Nicephorus, *Opuscula Historica*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1880), 65, 66; Theophanes, I:427, 429; Michael Syrus, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot, 2 (Paris, 1901), 518, 521, 523; Agapius of Menbidj, *Histoire universelle*, tr. A. A. Vasiliev, *Patrologia Orientalis*, 8 (1912), 544; Ghevond, *op. cit.*, 126-127.

⁴² Agapius of Menbidj, 531, 538; Dionysius I of Tell-Mahré, *Chronique*, tr. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1895), 56-57. Cf. A. Lombard, *Etudes d'histoire byzantine. Constantin V, empereur des Romains (740-775)* (Paris, 1902), 35. Among the people involved were some Alans also.

expedition into Cilicia and Syria resulted in the seizure of thousands of natives, 150,000, according to one authority, who were settled in Thrace.⁴³ These, however, were chiefly Syrian Jacobites, though some Armenians may have also been among them. Nicephorus I used Armenians, along with other nationalities, in his resettlement of Sparta at the beginning of the ninth century.⁴⁴ Moreover, many individual Armenians are known to have come from Armenia and to have entered the service of the Byzantine state in both the seventh and eighth centuries. Occasionally, however, Armenians were driven out of the Byzantine Empire. We are told that the Emperor Philippicus, himself of Armenian descent, drove the Armenians out of his realm and forced them to settle in the regions of Melitene.⁴⁵ We do not know the reason for this; it may have been religious, but it had no consequence insofar as the role of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire was concerned. That role was to grow in importance in the centuries to come.

Thus, the Armenians were very much in evidence in the Byzantine Empire in the seventh and eighth centuries. They came of their own volition as refugees or were forcibly removed from their homes, and they settled in various parts of the Empire, particularly in Thrace and on the eastern frontier. Also, despite the conquest of Armenia by the Arabs, a conquest which was virtually complete by the end of the seventh century, some Armenian-speaking lands still remained in the possession of the Empire. However, it was as soldiers and officers of the army that the Armenians exerted their greatest influence in Byzantium.

It is well known that the Armenian element occupied a prominent place in the armies of Justinian. Armenian troops fought in Africa, Italy, and along the eastern front. They were also prominent in the palace guard.⁴⁶ Procopius mentions by name no less than seventeen Armenian commanders, including, of course, the great Narses.⁴⁷ But the Armenians constituted only one among the different elements that made up the armies of Justinian. These elements included many barbarians: Erulians, Gepids, Goths, Huns, Lombards, Moors, Sabiri, Slavs and Antae, Vandals; a number of Persians, Iberians, and Tzani; and among the provincials, Illyrians, Thracians, Isaurians, and Lycaonians.⁴⁸

⁴³ Theophanes, I:451-52; Ghevond, *op. cit.*, 150; Michael Syrus, 3:2.

⁴⁴ P. Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), 154-155. In 792, following the suppression of a revolt among the Armenians, one thousand of them were removed from the Armeniac theme and were settled in Sicily and other islands: Theophanes, I:469.

⁴⁵ Theophanes, I:382; Michael Syrus, 2:482; Agapius of Menbidj, 500.

⁴⁶ Procopius, *De bello Persico*, II 21, 2; *De bello Vandalico*, II 24, 2; *De bello Gothico*, II 27, 16; III 6, 10; III 26, 24; III 27, 3, 10; *Anecdota* 24, 16.

⁴⁷ The names of these commanders are listed in the index of the Haury edition of Procopius under Armenians or Persarmenians. Some of these commanders, as for instance Gilacius, spoke only Armenian: *De bello Gothico*, III 27, 24. In the plot which led to the assassination of Gontharis, the bodyguard of Solomon, the conspirators communicated between themselves in Armenian: *De bello Vandalico*, II 28, 16.

⁴⁸ For Erulians: Procopius, *De bello Persico*, I 13, 20; II 24, 13, 41; *De bello Vandalico*, II 4, 28; II 14, 12; *De bello Gothico*, II 13, 18; III 33, 13; IV 26, 13; Agathias, *Historia* (Bonn, 1828), 57, 79, 148, 184. For Gepids: *De bello Gothico*, IV 26, 13. For Goths: *De bello Gothico*, I 16, 2; III 1, 6; *De bello Persico*, II 14, 10; II 18, 24; II 21, 4. For Huns, *De bello Persico*, I 13, 20; I 21, 11; II 12, 6; *De bello Vandalico*, I 11, 11-12; II 1, 5-10; *De bello Gothico*, I 5, 4; I 27, 2; IV 26, 13; Agathias, 60-67. For Lombards, *De bello Gothico*, III 39, 20; IV 26, 12; IV 33, 2, 3; Agathias, 184. For

Under the immediate successors of Justinian, the composition of the Byzantine army remained very much the same. "It is said," writes Evagrius, "that Tiberius raised an army of 150,000 among the peoples that dwelt beyond the Alps around the Rhine and among those this side of the Alps, among the Massagetae and other Scythian nations, among those that dwelt in Paeonia and Mysia, and also among the Illyrians and Isaurians, and dispatched them against the Persians."⁴⁹ The figure given by Evagrius may perhaps be questioned, but the rest of his statement cannot be doubted. It is confirmed by Theophanes, though the figure he gives is much smaller (15,000).⁵⁰ John of Ephesus reports that, following the breakdown of negotiations with Persia (575–577), a force of 60,000 Lombards was expected in the East.⁵¹ The same author states: "Necessity compelled Tiberius to enlist under his banners a barbarian people from the West called Goths...who were followers of the doctrine of the wicked Arius. They departed for Persia, leaving their wives and children at Constantinople."⁵² In Constantinople the wives of these Goths requested that a church be allocated to them, so that they might worship according to their Arian faith. Thus, it seems quite certain that the ethnic composition of the Byzantine army under Tiberius remained substantially the same as it had been during the reign of Justinian.

The situation changed in the course of the reign of Maurice, chiefly as a result of the Avaro-Slavic incursions of the Balkan peninsula. These incursions virtually eliminated Illyricum as a source of recruits and reduced the potential of Thrace. They also cut communication with the west and made recruitment there most difficult. The Empire had to turn elsewhere for its troops. It turned to the regions of the Caucasus and Armenia. In the armies of Maurice we still find some Huns⁵³ and also some Lombards;⁵⁴ Bulgars too,⁵⁵ but the Armenian element dominates. In this respect Sebeos is once more a precious source. In connection with the war which Maurice undertook against the Avars after 591 Sebeos writes: Maurice "ordered to gather together all the Armenian cavalry and all the noble Nakharars skilled in war and adroit in wielding the lance in combat. He ordered also a numerous army to be raised in Armenia, an

Moors, *De bello Gothico*, I 5, 4; III 1, 6; *De bello Persico*, II 21, 4; Agathias, 184. For Sabiri: *De bello Gothico*, IV 11, 22–26; Agathias, 177. For Slavs and Antae: *De bello Gothico*, I 27, 1–2; II 15, 18, 22; III 22, 3; Agathias, 186. For Vandals: *De bello Vandalico*, II 14, 17; *De bello Persico*, II 21, 4. For Persians: *De bello Gothico*, III 11, 37; IV 26, 13. For Iberians: *De bello Persico*, I 12, 11–13; I 22, 16; II 28, 1; *De bello Gothico*, I 5, 3; III 4, 10. For Tzani: *De bello Gothico*, IV 13, 10; Agathias, 109. For Illyrians: *De bello Gothico*, III 11, 11, 15, 16, III 12, 4; III 39, 9; IV 26, 10; *De bello Persico*, II 21, 4. For Thracians: *De bello Persico*, II 21, 4; *De bello Gothico*, II 5, 1; II 11, 5; III 6, 10; III 12, 4; III 39, 9; IV 26, 10. For Isaurians: *De bello Persico*, I 18, 5, 38–40; *De bello Gothico*, I 5, 12; II 11, 5; III 36, 7, 14; Agathias, 184. For Lycaonians, *De bello Persico*, I 18, 38–40.

Among the provincials, especially natives of Asia Minor, there was a strong dislike for military service; St. Basil wrote in one of his letters: "... a large number of persons are presenting themselves for the ministry through fear of the conscription." Basil, *Letters*, ed. Deferrari, I:344 (Letter 54).

⁴⁹ Evagrius, 209f.

⁵⁰ Theophanes, I:251.

⁵¹ John of Ephesus, Smith, 407, Brooks, 234.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Smith, 207, Brooks, 113.

⁵³ Theophylactus Simocatta, 67.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁵ Michael Syrus, 2:72.

army composed of soldiers of good will and good stature, organized in regular corps and armed. He ordered that this army should go to Thrace under the command of Musele (Moushegh) Mamiconian and there fight the enemy."⁵⁶ This army was actually organized and fought in Thrace. Mamiconian was captured and killed,⁵⁷ whereupon the raising of an Armenian force of 2,000 armed cavalry was ordered. This force, too, was sent to Thrace.⁵⁸ Earlier, during the Persian wars, important Armenian contingents under the command of John Mystacon operated on the eastern front.⁵⁹ In 602 Maurice issued the following edict: "I need 30,000 cavalymen, as tribute, raised in Armenia. Thirty thousand families must be gathered and settled in Thrace."⁶⁰ Priscus was sent to Armenia to carry out this edict, but before he had time to do so the revolution that overthrew Maurice broke out, and the edict apparently was not enforced. It is interesting to observe the correlation between the number of cavalry and the number of families that were to be transplanted to Thrace. Each family was obviously intended to furnish one cavalryman, and no doubt each family was going to be given some land. Here we have, perhaps, an indication that Maurice sought to extend the system of military estates in Thrace.^{60a} But, however that may be, it is quite clear that under Maurice Armenia became the principal source of recruits for the Byzantine army.⁶¹ The same was true under Heraclius, himself of Armenian descent,⁶² though that Emperor also drew heavily on the people of the Caucasus—Lazi, Abasgians, Iberians—

⁵⁶ Sebeos, 35.

⁵⁷ Cf. Goubert, *op. cit.*, I:197.

⁵⁸ Sebeos, 36—37. Cf. Goubert, *op. cit.*, I:200; Dölger, *op. cit.*, 12, no. 94.

⁵⁹ Theophylactus Simocatta, 205, 216.

⁶⁰ Sebeos, 54—55. Cf. Goubert, *op. cit.*, I:209; Dölger, *op. cit.*, 16, no. 137.

^{60a} The widely accepted view which associates the increase of military estates throughout the Empire with the establishment of the theme system and places both of these developments in the seventh century has very recently been questioned: J. Karayannopoulos, "Contribution au problème des 'thèmes' byzantins," *L'hellénisme contemporain*, ser. 2, 10 (1956), 492—501; *Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung* (= Byzantinisches Archiv, Heft 10) (Munich, 1959), 71—88. See also Paul Lemerle, "Esquisse pour une histoire agraire de Byzance: Les sources et les problèmes," *Revue historique*, 220 (1958), 43—70. Karayannopoulos contends that the spread of military estates and the establishment of the theme system were not related, that both developed gradually over a long period of time, and that no one emperor was responsible for either. However this may be, it is very probable, as this passage from Sebeos suggests, that the growth of military estates was connected with the shifting of population from one province to another and the resettlement of immigrant peoples for military purposes. As both of these practices were frequently resorted to in the seventh and eighth centuries, it is in those two centuries, but most probably in the seventh, that one should put the beginnings of the wide distribution of the military estates. This is not the place to discuss Lemerle's interpretation of the military estates.

⁶¹ Scholars have long recognized that the ascendancy of the Armenian element in the Byzantine Empire dates from the reign of Maurice. M. K. Patkanian wrote in 1866: "A partir de cette époque [the reign of Maurice] les chefs des milices arméniennes, en Thrace, commencèrent à jouer un rôle important dans l'armée grecque, parvinrent aux plus hauts grades militaires, et plusieurs d'entre eux montèrent même sur le trône des empereurs." M. K. Patkanian, "Essai d'une histoire de la dynastie des Sassanides, d'après les renseignements fournis par les historiens arméniens," tr. from Russian by Evariste Prud'homme, *Journal asiatique*, 7 (1866), 194, note 3. Armenian troops under Armenian officers were also stationed in Byzantine Italy during this period. Cf. H. W. Haussig, "Anfänge der Themenordnung," in F. Altheim—R. Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike* (Frankfurt a. M., 1957), 106, note 76.

⁶² The father of the Emperor Heraclius, also named Heraclius, who served as general during the reign of Maurice, is said to have been a native of a city located in Armenia. Theophylactus Simocatta, *op. cit.*, 109—110. John of Nikiu calls the Emperor Heraclius a Cappadocian. *Chronique*, tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1883), 431.

as well as on the Khazars.⁶³ It should also be observed that among the defenders of Constantinople against the Avars in 626 there were some Armenians.⁶⁴ As we have said, by the end of the seventh century Armenia was lost to the Arabs, but throughout that century the Armenians continued to be one of the dominant elements in the Byzantine army. The Armeniacs, whose territory in the seventh century included Armenian-speaking lands, were primarily Armenians.⁶⁵

The significance of the Armenian element in the Byzantine Empire is further illustrated by the number of persons of Armenian descent who came to occupy influential positions. They served as generals, as members of the imperial retinue, as governors of provinces. Under Heraclius the Armenian Manuel was named *praefectus augustalis* in Egypt.⁶⁶ Armenian generals served the same Emperor in the field. One of these, Vahan, was actually proclaimed Emperor by his troops just before the battle of Yermuk.⁶⁷ He later retired to Sinai and became a monk. Armenian princes in Constantinople were very influential. They even plotted to overthrow Heraclius and to place on the throne his illegitimate son, Athalaric.⁶⁸ In 641 it was the Armenian Valentinus, an Arsacid, who enabled Constans II to assume the throne following the death of his father. Valentinus was put in command of the troops in the East, but shortly afterwards, having failed in a plot to seize the throne for himself, he was executed.⁶⁹ Other Armenian generals are known to have served under Constans II. Two of these, Sabour, surnamed Aparasitgan,⁷⁰ and Theodore were commanders of the Armeniacs.⁷¹ After the violent death of Constans II, the Armenian Mizizius (Mjej Gnouni) was proclaimed Emperor, and though he was not able to maintain this position, he should be included among the emperors of Armenian descent who occupied the Byzantine throne.⁷² Later his son John felt strong enough to rebel against Constantine IV, but he, too, failed and was destroyed.⁷³ Many Armenians are known to have been prominent in the service of the Empire in the eighth century also. The Armenian Bardanes occupied the throne from 711

⁶³ Theophanes, I:304, 309, 316; Nicephorus, 15; Agapius of Menbidj 463. Cf. H. Grégoire, "An Armenian Dynasty on the Byzantine Throne," *Armenian Quarterly*, I (1946), 9.

⁶⁴ *Chronicon Paschale*, I (Bonn, 1832), 724. There was an Armenian colony in Constantinople during this time. F. C. Conybeare, "Ananias of Shirak (A.D. 600-650)," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 6 (1897), 572. Cf. P. Peeters, "A propos de la version arménienne de l'histoire de Socrate," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales*, 2 (Brussels, 1934), 673.

⁶⁵ Theophanes, I:469.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I:338; Michael Syrus, 2:425.

⁶⁷ Theophanes, I:318; 338. J. B. Bury considers him a Persian: *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* (London, 1889), 2:263 f. But cf. Lebeau-St. Martin, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, II (Paris, 1830), 208, note 2; 214; also A. Pernice, *L'Imperatore Eraclio* (Florence, 1905), 280.

⁶⁸ Sebeos, 93.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 103-4; 105. Cf. H. Manandean, *op. cit.*, 182. For the account given by the Greek sources cf. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1889), 2:283 ff.

⁷⁰ Theophanes, I:348; Michael Syrus, 2:451 and note. 9. Cf. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 194, note 3.

⁷¹ Sebeos, 106. Cf. Manandean, *op. cit.*, 190 ff.

⁷² Theophanes, I:352; Michael Syrus, 2:451. The Armenian version of Michael Syrus has Mejej in place of Mizizius. Langlois, who translated this version into French, remarks on this: "Méjej, en grec Mizizius, qui paraît, par son appellation, appartenir à la race ou famille des Gnouniens." V. Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand, patriarche des Syriens jacobites, traduite pour la première fois sur la version arménienne du prêtre Ischôk* (Venice, 1868), 241 and note 6. Cf. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 193, note 4; Lebeau-St. Martin, *op. cit.*, II:406, note 1.

⁷³ Michael Syrus, 2:455.

to 713. Artavasdos, son-in-law of Leo III and at one time general of the Armeniacs, also attempted to seize the crown, and for a time was actually master of Constantinople.⁷⁴ He was ably assisted by other Armenians, his cousin Teridates, Vahtan the patrician, and another Artavasdos.⁷⁵ During the brief period when he held Constantinople, he crowned his son Nicephorus, Co-Emperor and made his other son, Nicetas, general of the Armeniacs.⁷⁶ The Armeniacs, the vast majority of whom, as has been said, were Armenians, constituted Artavasdos' strongest supporters.⁷⁷ Other eminent Armenians are known to have served the empire under Constantine V Copronymus. Tadjat Andzevatzik, who came to Byzantium about 750, proved to be a successful commander in the course of Constantine's Bulgarian campaigns. Under Leo IV we find him as general of the Bucellarii.⁷⁸ He subsequently fled to the Arabs. Another Armenian, the prince Artavazd Mamiconian, who joined the Byzantine forces about 771, was general of the Anatolikon under Leo IV.⁷⁹ More Armenians are mentioned during the reign of Constantine VI and Irene. Bardas, one-time general of the Armeniacs, was involved in a conspiracy to have Leo IV succeeded by his brother Nicephorus and not by his son Constantine.⁸⁰ Another Vardas lost his life in the Bulgarian campaign which Constantine VI conducted in 792.⁸¹ Artasaras, or Artashir, was another Armenian general active during the reign of Constantine VI.⁸² Alexius Musele (Moushegh), drungarius of the watch and later general of the Armeniacs, seems even to have aspired to the throne. At least he was accused of entertaining this ambition and was blinded.⁸³ His family, however, achieved great distinction in the ninth and tenth centuries. Another great Byzantine family of Armenian descent, the Skleroi, made its

⁷⁴ Theophanes, I:386, 395, 414; Nicephorus, 59.

⁷⁵ Theophanes, I:418, 419, 420.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 418.

⁷⁸ Ghevond, *op. cit.*, 150, 153; Theophanes, I:451. Cf. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 193, note 3. Under Constantine V, a Constantine, son of the patrician Bardanes was put to death in 766 for conspiracy. Theophanes, I:438. A Bardanes was general of the Armeniacs in 772. Theophanes, I:445. As the name Bardanes is Armenian, these persons may have been Armenians.

⁷⁹ Ghevond, *op. cit.*, 134, 150; cf. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 193; Theophanes, I:451. Two other Armenians, Varaz-Tirots, general of the Armeniacs, and Gregory, son of Mousoulak, general of the Opsikion, served the Empire under Leo IV. Cf. N. Adontz, "L'âge et l'origine de l'empereur Basile I," *Byzantion*, 9 (1934), 242.

⁸⁰ Theophanes, I:454. Bardas' Armenian origin is indicated by his name.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, I: 468. I do not know on what basis Adontz refers to this Bardas as the father of Leo V the Armenian. N. Adontz, "Role of the Armenians in Byzantine Science," *The Armenian Review*, 3, no. 3 (1950), 64. Under Constantine VI, Irene, and Nicephorus I, we encounter a number of persons who bore the Armenian name Bardanes and who were probably Armenians: Bardanes, patrician and *domesticus scholarum*; Bardanes, general of the Thracians; Bardanes, called the Turk, general of the Anatolikon, who made an attempt to seize the throne; Bardanes, called Anemas, a spatharius. Theophanes, I:471, 474, 479-80, 482. Another Armenian, the patrician Arsaber was Quaestor under Nicephorus I. In the unsuccessful plot of 808 to overthrow Nicephorus, Arsaber had been chosen as the new emperor. Theophanes, I:483. Cf. J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I* (London, 1912), 14. This Arsaber was the father of the Empress Theodora, wife of Leo V the Armenian. Genesisius, 21. Another Armenian named Bardas a relative (σύγγαμβρος) of Leo V, was general of the Thracians during the reign of this Emperor. *S. Theodori Studitae Vita*, PG, 99, 300. Cf. Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire*, 68, 72. See further N. Adontz, "Sur l'origine de Léon V, empereur de Byzance," *Armeniaca*, II (1927), 9-10.

⁸² Theophanes, I:468, 469.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, I:466, 467, 468; cf. Lebeau-St. Martin, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 12 (Paris, 1831), 355, note 3.

appearance in Byzantium at this time or soon thereafter. Leo Skleros, governor of the Peloponnesus at the beginning of the ninth century, is the first member of this family known to us.⁸⁴

It will be noted that most of these Armenians were associated at one time or another with the Armeniac theme. The turbulent, but very energetic, thematic corps of the Armeniacs is very much in evidence throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. It is the clearest indication of the prominence of the Armenian element in the Byzantine Empire during this period. It should be pointed out, however, that in general the Armenians who entered the service of the Empire embraced orthodoxy and so identified themselves with the interests of the Empire. Yet there were always Armenians within its borders who sought to maintain their own traditions.

The event which, as we have already observed, brought the Armenians into prominence was the collapse of Byzantine power in the Balkan peninsula and the consequent loss of the sources which in the earlier centuries had furnished the Empire with some of its best troops.

No doubt the most important ethnic change in the Balkan peninsula since ancient times was brought about by the incursions and the settlement of the Slavs. The circumstances and exact chronology of the Slavic settlements in the Balkan peninsula are still, despite the meticulous work of many scholars, a historical puzzle. The reason for this is, of course, the brevity and chronological vagueness of our sources. This vagueness is best illustrated by the compilation known as the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, the most important single text we possess on the settlement of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula. No less than three serious studies of this text have been made in the last five years,⁸⁵ but they serve only to emphasize the difficulty of the problem since they offer different solutions to the crucial questions of chronology. The problem has been further confused by the nationalistic bias of certain scholars. The following facts, however, are sufficiently clear.

The first appearance of the Slavs in the Byzantine Empire can be dated no earlier than the sixth century.⁸⁶ Throughout this century, beginning with the reign of Justinian, Slavs repeatedly invaded the Balkan possessions of the Byzantine Empire. Not until the reign of Maurice, however, did any Slavs settle in these territories. Between the years 579–587 there took place the irruption of several barbarian waves led by the Avars, but consisting mostly

⁸⁴ Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia...", 145.

⁸⁵ P. Lemerle, "La composition et la chronologie des deux premiers livres des *Miracula S. Demetrii*," *BZ*, 46 (1953), 349–361; A. Burmov, "Les sièges de Thessalonique par les Slaves dans *Miracula Sancti Demetrii Martyris* et leur chronologie," *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia. Faculté de Philosophie et Histoire. Livre I, histoire*, 47 (1952) (in Bulgarian), 167–215; F. Barišić, *Miracles de St. Démétrius comme source historique* (Académie Serbe de Sciences. Monographies CCXIX. Institut d'Etudes Byzantines, 2) (Belgrade, 1953). As I read neither Bulgarian nor Serbian, I have relied principally on the French resumé which both Burmov and Barišić give of their respective works. I have, however, with the help of my friend George Soulis, consulted certain sections of the Bulgarian and Serbian texts. Cf. also Ep. Chrysanthopoulos, "Τὰ Βιβλία Θαυμάτων τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου," *Θεολογία*, 24 (1953), 597–606; 25 (1954), 145–152; 26 (1955), 91–106, 293–309, 457–464; 593–619; 27 (1956), 82–94; 260–272, 481–496. This work has now appeared under the same title in book form: Athens, 1958. It is a serious study, but I find myself unable to agree with its main conclusions.

⁸⁶ Cf. F. Dvornik, *The Slavs. Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956), 34 ff.

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of Slavs. The latter came in great numbers, and, as the troops of the Empire were engaged in the war with Persia, they roamed the country at will. They devastated Illyricum and Thrace, penetrated deep into Greece and the Peloponnesus, helped the Avars to take numerous cities, including Singidunum, Viminacium (Kostolac), Durostorum (Silistria), Marcianopolis, Anchialus, and Corinth, and in 586 laid siege to the city of Thessalonica, the first of a series of great sieges which that city was destined to undergo at their hands.⁸⁷ What is more, they came to stay. "The Slavonians," wrote John of Ephesus in 584, "still encamp and dwell in the Roman territories and live in peace there, free from anxiety and fear, and lead captives and slay and burn."⁸⁸ The counter-offensive launched by Maurice after 591, following the successful termination of the Persian war, had the effect, on the whole, of checking the repeated incursions of the Avars, who then seem to have transferred their operations farther west beyond the limits of Byzantine territory. The treaty of peace which the Empire concluded with them in 601 (the date is not absolutely certain) fixed the Danube as the boundary line between the two powers, but left the way open for the Byzantines to cross that river and chastise any Slavs that might appear dangerous.⁸⁹ There is no indication, however, that the Slavs who had penetrated into the Empire were forced to retire beyond the Danube, or that they did so of their own accord.

The settlement of the Slavs in the Balkan peninsula occurred mainly in the seventh century, more specifically during the disastrous reign of Phocas (602–610) and the early years of Heraclius. For the reign of Phocas there are no specific references in the sources to any Avaro-Slav invasions of Byzantine territory, but a general statement in Theophanes, apparently derived from Theophylact Simocatta,⁹⁰ leaves no doubt, despite a recent attempt to minimize its significance,⁹¹ that the Avars came repeatedly. For the reign of Heraclius our information is more explicit, though it leaves much to be desired, especially with regard to chronology. The Slavs had by now not only reached the Aegean, but also taken to the sea. "It happened . . .," we read in the *Miracula Sancti*

⁸⁷ Cf. H. Grégoire, "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," *Byzantion*, 18 (1944–1945), 88–118; P. Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VIII^e siècle," *Revue historique*, 211 (1954), 281 ff.; L. Hauptmann, "Les rapports des Byzantins avec les Slaves et les Avars pendant la seconde moitié du VI^e siècle," *Byzantion*, 4 (1927–28), 137–170. The siege of Thessalonica took place on Sunday, 22 September, in the reign of Maurice: *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, Migne, PG, 116. 1288. This must have been either in 586 or 597, for these are the only two years during the reign of Maurice when 22 September fell on a Sunday. Considering the position of the Avars in the year 597, it seems unlikely that they could have besieged Thessalonica in that year. The year 586 is, therefore, to be preferred: Charanis, "On the Capture of Corinth by the Onogurs and its Recapture by the Byzantines," *Speculum*, 27 (1952), 347; Barišić, *op. cit.*, 60–64. Some scholars, however, have shown preference for the year 597. For a list of the scholars who have taken a position on this issue one way or another, Barišić, *op. cit.*, 10. To the list given by Barišić we may add Burmov (*op. cit.*, 183–185) and Lemerle ("La composition et la chronologie des deux premiers livres des *Miracula S. Demetrii*," 354) both of whom adopt the year 597.

⁸⁸ John of Ephesus, trans. Smith, 432.

⁸⁹ Hauptmann, *op. cit.*, 160 ff.

⁹⁰ Theophanes, I:290; Theophylactus Simocatta, 308.

⁹¹ F. Barišić, "De Avaro-Slavis in Phocae imperatoris aetate," *Recueil des travaux de l'Acad. Serbe des Sciences*, XLIX: Institut d'Etudes Byzantines, 4 (Belgrade, 1956) (in Serbian with a Latin summary), 76–86. I have consulted the Serbian text with the help of Dr. Miloš M. Velimirović.

Demetrii, that "during the bishopric of John of blessed memory, the nation of the Slavs, a countless multitude, was aroused. This multitude was drawn from the Drogubites, Sagudates, Velegezetes, Vajunetes, Berzetes, and others. Having first invented ships hewn from single pieces of timber, they took to the sea with their arms and pillaged all Thessaly and the islands about it and those about Hellas. They also pillaged the Cyclades, all Achaea, Epirus, and the greater part of Illyricum, and parts of Asia."⁹² The precise date of this event is not known, although Barišić is probably right in placing it toward the end of 614.⁹³ A year or so later the same Slavs, under the leadership of a certain Hatzon, laid siege to Thessalonica. The city, however, withstood their assault, and they had to turn for help to the Khagan of the Avars. He came two years later, but to no avail. Meanwhile cities of the interior such as Naissus and Sardica had fallen to the barbarians. The narrative of this series of events leaves one with the definite impression that the Slavs who were involved in them had not come from afar, but were already settled in the Balkan peninsula, including the region of Thessalonica. Indeed, if we except the passages that deal with events of the sixth century, we find in the *Miracula* no distinct reference to invasions by Slavs coming from afar. The Slavs involved in the various attacks against Thessalonica were already settled in Macedonia. They had established themselves there in the period between the beginning of the reign of Maurice and the early years of the reign of Heraclius.

An episode described in the *Miracula* indicates that other invaders who were not Slavs settled in the region of Thessalonica later in the seventh century. This is the episode involving Kouver,⁹⁴ a Bulgar whom the Khagan of the Avars had placed at the head of a mixed group under his domination. This group consisted of the descendants of Christian natives whom the Avars had carried away many years previously (about sixty years before, we are told) and the Avars, Bulgars, and other barbarians under the domination of the Khagan with whom these Christians had intermarried. These people dwelt in the region of Sirmium, maintained the traditions of their Christian ancestors, and were anxious to return to their old homes. Kouver, exploiting this desire, induced them to revolt and, after defeating the Avars who tried to check him, directed his followers toward Thessalonica, and then moved them in the direction of Monastir, where we lose sight of them. The date of this event is uncertain, but I am inclined to agree with those who place it toward the end of the reign of Heraclius.⁹⁵ This seems to fit in with what we know of the history of the Avars during this time. Their power in the Balkan peninsula was then in a state of decline, which had begun after their unsuccessful siege of Constantinople in 626.⁹⁶ An attempt has recently been made to identify the followers of Kouver

⁹² *Miracula S. Demetrii*, 1325 ff; A. Tougaard, *De l'histoire profane dans les actes grecs des Bollandistes* (Paris, 1874), 118-126.

⁹³ Barišić, *Miracles de St. Démétrius comme source historique*, 149.

⁹⁴ Tougaard, *op.cit.*, 187-189.

⁹⁵ For instance Grégoire, "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," 110 ff; Dvornik, *op. cit.*, 63, note 2. The retirement of the Avars from the Balkan peninsula to regions farther north is associated by the *Miracula S. Demetrii* with the successful rebellion of Kouver: Tougaard, *op. cit.*, 189.

⁹⁶ For the latest views on the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626 see Barišić, "Le siège de Constantinople par les Avars et les Slaves en 626," *Byzantion*, 24 (1954, published in 1956), 371-395.

with the Croats and Serbs, who also made their appearance at about this time and who contributed decisively to the disintegration of the Avar power in the Balkan peninsula.⁹⁷ This suggestion is tempting, but in view of the obscurity of our sources, which may not have preserved the various names involved in their original form, the identification must be considered doubtful. The Croats and Serbs, representing the last Slavonic wave to reach the Balkans, came with the consent of Heraclius and settled in the upper territory of the peninsula, the Croats in Dalmatia as far as the Sava, the Serbs in the region of the Urbas and the Morava, the ancient Margus.⁹⁸

The Bulgar⁹⁹ and Avar invasions of the Balkan peninsula in the sixth and seventh centuries created a demographic crisis. The cities of the interior were plundered and destroyed, while vast stretches of the countryside were left desolate and empty of their inhabitants. Hundreds of thousands of natives, Illyrians, Thracians, and Greeks were deported; thousands of others were killed. Those deported were settled in the regions beyond the Danube, where, as we learn from the text concerning Kouver, they intermarried with the barbarians. Doubtless the vast majority of them were absorbed and lost their identity. Some, however, tried to preserve their traditions and, like the followers of Kouver, made an effort to return to the homes of their fathers. Others no doubt stayed behind. This may provide a clue to the solution of the riddle concerning the origin of the modern Rumanians. South of the Danube the virtual elimination of the native population facilitated the establishment of the Slavs. Their settlements covered the heart of the peninsula and extended to the Adriatic, the Aegean, and the Balkan mountains. They were numerous in the region of Thessalonica, a fact known not only from literary sources, but also from many place-names of Slavic origin.¹⁰⁰ Thrace, though often devastated by the Slavs, escaped their occupation, but even there they established some settlements, as, for instance, near Vizya.¹⁰¹ The native Illyrians and Thracians of the occupied regions retired into the mountains, where they remained unnoticed till the eleventh century, when they emerged as Albanians and Vlachs. The ethnic composition of the heart of the Balkan peninsula was thus transformed. The coming of the Bulgars into the region between the Danube and the Balkan mountains during the reign of Constantine IV,¹⁰² though of great political importance, had hardly any ethnic consequences,

⁹⁷ Grégoire, "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," 116 ff. But see above, p. 16 ff.

⁹⁸ Constantine Prophyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik and R. J. H. Jenkins (Budapest, 1949), 122 ff. Cf. Grégoire, *ibid.*, 88 ff.

⁹⁹ The depopulation of the Balkan peninsula began with the invasions of the Bulgars (Utigurs and Kotrigurs) during the reign of Justinian. Thousands of inhabitants were deported beyond the Danube. Some of them managed to return. It is said, for instance, that as a result of the war between the Utigurs and the Kotrigurs, incited by Justinian about 550, "many tens of thousands of Romans," who had been previously captured by the Kotrigurs and transferred to the regions west of the Don, succeeded in escaping and returning to their native land. Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, IV 19, 1-2. We are also told that Justinian settled two thousand Kotrigurs with their wives and children in Thrace. Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, IV 19, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Max Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland* (Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, nr. 12) (Berlin, 1941), 202 ff.

¹⁰¹ Tougard, *op. cit.*, 156.

¹⁰² Theophanes, I: 356-359.

except that perhaps the Bulgars left the imprint of their character upon the Slavs, by whom they were eventually absorbed.

Slavs also settled in the Greek peninsula proper. This fact is quite evident, and no serious scholar has ever questioned it. What has been disputed is the precise date and the magnitude of the settlement. The sources, which are lacking in detail, give the impression that the country was flooded by the Slavs and that they overwhelmed every region.¹⁰³ We know that the Velegezetes who took part in the piratical expedition of 614, an expedition to which we have already referred, settled in Thessaly.¹⁰⁴ It is quite possible that the Vajunetes, who took part in the same expedition, eventually moved to Epirus, a region which is known from other sources to have been invaded by the Slavs. We also know by name two tribes which eventually settled in southern Peloponnesus. The Slavs likewise penetrated into Attica and into Locris and, we may assume, also into Boeotia, although we are given no specific indication of their settling there in the seventh century. Further, we are told that western Peloponnesus was completely occupied by the Slavs. If we now turn to the place-names of Slavic origin, we find that, according to Vasmer, they are most numerous in Epirus and western Greece (558), western and central Peloponnesus (387), and in Thessaly, including Phthiotis (230). They are least numerous in Attica (18), Argolis (18), Boeotia (22), Corinth (24), and Phokis (45).¹⁰⁵ The Slavic origin of some of these names has been questioned,¹⁰⁶ and some reserve has been shown concerning the historical inferences that may be drawn from them,¹⁰⁷ but even if we make due allowance for these observations, they remain nevertheless very significant. Indeed, they confirm what we know from the literary sources which, despite their fragmentary nature, clearly indicate that the regions of Greece most affected by the Slavic invasions were Thessaly, western Peloponnesus, and Epirus; those least affected were central Greece, including Attica, and eastern Peloponnesus.

Slavs, then, not only settled in Greece, but did so in considerable numbers. Though the date of this settlement has been a subject of dispute, the evidence points to the period which extended from just before the beginning of the reign of Maurice to the early years of the reign of Heraclius. That more Slavs may have come later in no way alters this fundamental conclusion. The settlement

¹⁰³ For a brief summary of the sources, Vasmer, *op. cit.*, 11–19. See also Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia and the Question of the Slavonic Settlements in Greece," 141–166. The latest literature is discussed *ibid.*, 164–166. The following works have appeared since: A. Bon, *Le Péloponèse byzantin jusqu'en 1204* (Paris, 1951), 27–64; P. Charanis, "On the Slavic Settlement in the Peloponnesus," *BZ*, 46 (1953), 19–103; A. Maricq, "Note sur les Slaves dans le Péloponèse," *Byzantion*, 22 (1952), 337–348; Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans...", 305 f. In connection with the Slavonic settlements in Greece there has been considerable discussion concerning the precise geographical meaning of the term "Hellas." On this problem see Charanis, "Hellas in the Greek Sources of the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Centuries," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), 161–176.

¹⁰⁴ Tougard, *op. cit.*, 166, 176.

¹⁰⁵ Vasmer, *op. cit.*, 20–76; 128–174; 85–110; 120–123; 126–127; 118–120; 123–125; 113–118.

¹⁰⁶ D. Georgakas, "Beiträge zur Deutung als Slavisch erklärter Ortsnamen," *BZ*, 41 (1942), 351–381; Σλαβική επίδραση στο τοπωνυμικό της Ἠπείρου, Εἰς Μνήμην Χρίστου Σούλη (1892–1956) (Athens, 1956), 149–161.

¹⁰⁷ D. Zakythinos, Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι (Athens, 1945), 72–82.

of Slavs in Greece does not, however, mean that the Greek population was completely obliterated. Despite the Slavic flood, the Greeks held their own in eastern Peloponnesus, in central Greece, including Attica (a region which is known to have been a theme as early as 695), and, of course, in the islands. A number of strongholds are known to have remained in the hands of the Byzantines. In the Peloponnesus there was Monemvasia in the south and Corinth in the north.¹⁰⁸ In central Greece there was Athens, where, if we may believe a hagiographical text, a Cappadocian conversed with philosophers and rhetoricians in the eighth century;¹⁰⁹ And farther north there was Thessalonica. These strongholds, even Thessalonica, were not great urban establishments in the seventh century, nor for that matter in the eighth, but they were to serve as centers for the pacification, absorption, and eventual Hellenization of the Slavs in Greece. Thessalonica in particular may be called the savior of Greece from the Slavs, for had she succumbed to their repeated attacks in the sixth and seventh centuries, the chances are that Greece would have been completely inundated by them. In the end, the Slavs in Greece proper were absorbed and disappeared from history. Fallmerayer's statement that there is no real Hellenic blood in the veins of the modern Greeks cannot, therefore, be accepted.

The Slavic penetration of Greece affected also the ethnography of Sicily and southern Italy. Scholars have noted that whereas about A.D. 600 Sicily "contained a considerable Latin element," by 650 it "had become completely Greek in language, rite, and culture."¹¹⁰ The explanation for this, it was thought, lay in the influx of a considerable number of Greek-speaking elements from Syria and Egypt as a result first of the Persian and then of the Arab conquests. But for this, with the exception of one or two texts referring to a few individuals, there is no evidence. The evidence that exists is of a different nature.¹¹¹ We

¹⁰⁸ Monemvasia was founded by Lacedaemonian refugees at the time of the invasion of the Peloponnesus by the Slavs during the reign of Maurice. Charanis, "The Chronicle of Monemvasia . . .," 148. On Corinth and Athens during the seventh century see Charanis, "On the Capture of Corinth by the Onogurs and its Recapture by the Byzantines," 343-350; "The Significance of Coins as Evidence for the History of Athens and Corinth in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Historia*, 4 (1955), 163-172.

¹⁰⁹ Life of St. Stephen of Surozh, ed. V. Vasil'evskij, *Russko-vizantijskija izsledovanija*, II (St. Petersburg, 1893), 75: Ξενитеυθεις δε της πατριδος εις τας Αθηνas επεδραμεν ειχε γαρ επιθυμian του προσκυνησαι και κατασπασσασθαι τον ναον της Θεομητορος. Εύρων δε εκεισε ενθαγενεις του τόπου και πατριους φιλοσόφους τε και ρήτορας, πάντας προσομιλήσας και διαλεχθεις ουκ ολίγα, εν Κωνσταντινουπόλει επέστρεψε.

¹¹⁰ L. White, *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), 17.

¹¹¹ See my paper "On the Question of the Hellenization of Sicily and Southern Italy during the Middle Ages," *The American Historical Review*, 52 (1946), 74-77. But see further O. Parlangeli, *Sui dialetti romanzi e romaici del Salento (Memorie dell' Instituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere. Classe di Lettere, Scienze Morali e Storiche, ser. III, XXV-XXVI)* (Milan, 1953), 141 f. For a contrary opinion see Stam. C. Caratzas, *L'origine des dialectes néo-grecs de l'Italie méridionale* (Paris, 1958), 47-61. The arguments of Caratzas against the view expressed here, especially since he accepts the testimony of Arethas of Caesarea, leave me absolutely unconvinced. See also, S. G. Kapsomenos, "Η μαρτυρία του λεξιλογίου για την επιβίωση του ελληνισμού στην μεσεμβρινή Ιταλία, Πεπραγμένα του Θ' Διεθν. Βυζαντινολ. Συνεδρίου, 3 (Athens, 1958), 299-324. Besides the lexical material, which constitutes the basis of his work, Kapsomenos examines also the historical evidence, but his examination is very superficial. The question of the survival of Greek in southern Italy is briefly touched upon by E. Pulgram, *The Tongues of Italy. Prehistory and History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 50. He is inclined to agree with those who claim the continuity of ancient Greek, but refers also (50, note 7) to B. Migliorini who, in his as yet unpublished work, *The Italian Language*, suggests a compromise: "the two factions are not really so far apart since even Rohlfis admits that the hold of Greek had become very tenuous by the time it was in fact invigorated through fresh Byzantine immigration." Cf. my paper (75, 84) where I make this observation.

know that at the time of the great Avaro-Slav invasion of the Peloponnesus during the reign of Maurice many Peloponnesians fled and sought refuge elsewhere. We are specifically told that among these Peloponnesians, many Lacedaemonians settled in Sicily, while the people of Patras found new homes in the territory of Rhegium in Calabria. And although documentation is lacking, it is not improbable that other Greeks, too, from Epirus, central Greece, and western Peloponnesus went to Sicily or Italy at that time. As the Slavs occupied virtually all the western part of the Peloponnesus, the Peloponnesians who succeeded in fleeing could find no nearer haven than Sicily or Italy. That Greek-speaking elements from Syria and Egypt may also have settled in Sicily and southern Italy cannot, of course, be ruled out, but such evidence as there is clearly indicates that the bulk of the settlers came from Greece, particularly from the Peloponnesus, during, and as a result of, the great Avar and Slav invasions of the late sixth century and perhaps later. It is interesting, too, to observe that as a result of the changes which took place in the Balkan peninsula and in Italy during this time, the effective jurisdiction of the papacy was reduced to lands where the Greek-speaking element was very considerable. This fact explains the predominance of Greek-speaking orientals among the popes of the seventh and eighth centuries. It is well known that of the thirteen popes who occupied the pontifical throne from 678 to 752 eleven were Greek-speaking.

The ethnography of Asia Minor also was to some degree affected by the coming of the Slavs. In their various raids the Slavs touched upon Asia Minor,¹¹² but there is no evidence that they settled there of their own volition. They were brought to Asia Minor by the Byzantine emperors for political and military reasons; political, because the emperors wanted to reduce the pressure that the Slavs were exerting in the Balkan peninsula, especially in the region around Thessalonica; military, because they wanted to enroll these Slavs in their armies. There are for the seventh century two references in our literary sources to the establishment of Slavic colonies in Asia Minor. The first tell us that in the course of an expedition which the Saracens made into "Romania" in 665, five thousand Slavs went over to them and were settled by them in Syria.¹¹³ "Romania" means Asia Minor in this context, and although we are not explicitly told that the Slavs in question were settled there, the chances are that they formed a military colony which had been established in those parts. The second reference is more explicit. We are told that in 688 Justinian II "made an expedition against Sclavinia and Bulgaria . . . and sallying forth as far as Thessalonica, seized many multitudes of Slavs, some by war, others with their consent . . . and settled them in the region of the Opsikion theme," i.e., in Bithynia.¹¹⁴ From among these Slavs Justinian raised an army of 30,000, which he led against the Arabs (A.D. 692). Twenty thousand of these Slavs—probably an

¹¹² Tougaard, *op. cit.*, 118.

¹¹³ Theophanes, I:348.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 364; Nicephorus, *op. cit.*, 36. Justinian's expedition to Thessalonica is also attested by an inscription that has been edited by A. A. Vasiliev, "An Edict of the Emperor Justinian II, September 688," *Speculum*, 18 (1943), 1-13. But cf. Grégoire, "Un édit de l'empereur Justinien," *Byzantion*, 17 (1944-1945), 119-124a.

exaggerated figure—deserted to the enemy, an act of betrayal which so angered Justinian that he killed the remaining 10,000 together with their wives and children. Formerly I expressed the view that Justinian had destroyed the entire Slavic colony in Bithynia,¹¹⁵ but a more attentive reading of the text, as A. Maricq has pointed out,¹¹⁶ does not bear out this conclusion. The Slavic colony in Bithynia not only survived,¹¹⁷ but was, in the following century, augmented by another great settlement¹¹⁸ and perhaps by others besides.¹¹⁹ In the beginning of the ninth century a Slav of Asia Minor very nearly ascended the throne; the view, however, that his uprising was an expression of Slav nationalism is a figment of the imagination.¹²⁰ The Slavs of Bithynia still existed in the tenth century,¹²¹ though they were eventually absorbed and lost their identity.

But let us return to the Balkan peninsula. The settlement of the Slavs in that area virtually eliminated the Latin-speaking element from the Byzantine Empire. The Latinized Illyrians and Thracians were killed or deported, or else retired into the mountains, where they lived unnoticed for centuries. It is true that the Empire still clung to Ravenna, Rome, and Naples, had a foothold in southern Italy, controlled all of Sicily, and did not lose Carthage until the very end of the seventh century. Here the Latin-speaking element was dominant, although in Sicily and southern Italy Greek had begun to gain the upper hand. But these were peripheral regions which did not play a significant role, in spite of the importance that the Byzantine emperors attached to retaining them. It had been otherwise with Illyricum and Thrace. Illyricum had been for a long time the best recruiting ground for the Byzantine army. Some of its ablest officers had come from there as well as from Thrace. The loss of Illyricum meant the elimination of the most important Latin-speaking element of the Empire. In the central regions of the Empire there was, thenceforth, no significant segment of the population that spoke Latin, and Latin had to surrender its position as the language of the administration and of the army. Under Heraclius Greek became the official language of the state. Latin ceased to be studied and was eventually forgotten.¹²² An emperor of the ninth century referred to it as a "barbarous Scythian language."¹²³ In the meantime developments in the west gave to the papacy a western orientation, and so there evolved the conditions which were to bring about the separation of the Latin and the Greek worlds.

¹¹⁵ Charanis, "The Slavic Element in Byzantine Asia Minor in the Thirteenth Century," *Byzantion*, 18 (1946-1948), 74. According to Michael Syrus (2:470) the number of Slavs who deserted to the Arabs numbered only about seven thousand. Cf. Maricq, *op. cit.*, 349.

¹¹⁶ Maricq, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁷ I am now inclined to agree with Ostrogorsky that the seal which refers to the Slavs in Bithynia dates from 694/95 and not from 650 as I had formerly thought. Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Munich, 1952), 107, note 1.

¹¹⁸ Nicephorus, 68f.; Theophanes, I:432.

¹¹⁹ Theophanes Continuatus, 50. But cf. Charanis, *op. cit.*, 73.

¹²⁰ Charanis, *op. cit.*, 79-80.

¹²¹ Charanis, *op. cit.*, 80-81.

¹²² On the status of Latin in the Eastern Roman Empire one may consult the important work of H. Zilliacus, *Zum Kampf der Weltsprachen im oströmischen Reich* (Helsinki, 1935). It was only gradually, however, that Latin was eliminated as the language of the army. It was still in use at the end of the seventh century. Cf. A. Pertusi, "La formation des thèmes byzantins," *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* (Munich, 1958), 25-26 and note 129.

¹²³ Michael III in a letter to Pope Nicholas I: *Nicolai Papae Epistolae et Decreta*, Migne, *PL*, 119. 932.

Among the many scholars who have attempted to determine the causes of this estrangement only a few have given due weight to the occupation of the Balkan peninsula by the Slavs. In reality this was one of the most important causes.¹²⁴

In his account of the revolt of Thomas the Slavonian, the historian Genesisius, himself of Armenian descent,¹²⁵ lists a variety of peoples from whom the army of the rebel had been drawn; Saracens, Indians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Medes, Abasgians, Zichs, Vandals, Getae, Alans, Chaldoi, and Armenians, as well as adherents of the heretical sects of the Paulicians and Athinganoi.¹²⁶ Even if the identity of all these nations is not entirely clear,¹²⁷ the mere enumeration of them illustrates vividly the multi-racial character of the Byzantine Empire. I speak here of the ninth century, but the same could be said of both the preceding and the following periods. Greeks, including the Hellenized natives of Asia Minor, Armenians, Slavs, peoples from the Caucasus, obscure tribes such as the Mardaïtes whom Justinian II removed from Lebanon and settled in the Empire (probably in the region of Attalia),¹²⁸ remnants of the Huns, Bulgars, and Turks—all these nationalities were represented in the population of the Empire. The Greeks no doubt predominated, but some of the others, as, for instance, the Armenians and the Slavs, were both important and numerous. But, despite the multi-racial nature of the Empire, two forces tended to give it unity. The first was orthodoxy; the other was a common language. Both were Greek, and to the extent that they were Greek the Empire also was Greek. But in another sense the Empire was neither Greek nor Roman. It was above all Christian, and in it, if we may use the words of St. Paul, there was “neither Jew nor Greek,” but “all one in Christ Jesus.”¹²⁹

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¹²⁴ Prof. F. Dvornik has repeatedly emphasized the importance of this factor. See his recent work, *The Slavs. Their Early History and Civilization*, 44–45. Cf. also above, p. 10 ff.

¹²⁵ C. de Boor, “Zu Genesisios,” *BZ*, 10 (1901), 62–65.

¹²⁶ Genesisius, 33.

¹²⁷ Vasiliev-Grégoire, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I:31, note 2. Cf. F. Hirsch, *Byzantinische Studien* (Leipzig, 1876), 131.

¹²⁸ Theophanes, I:363, 364; Agapius of Menbidj, 497; Michael Syrus, 2:469. Cf. Honigmann, *op. cit.*, 41; J. Morelli, *Bibliotheca manuscripta graeca et latina*, I (Bassano, 1802), 217. In the ninth and tenth centuries we find Mardaïtes also in the Peloponnesus, at Nicopolis in Epirus, and Cephalonia: Theophanes Continuatus, 304, 311; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, I (Bonn, 1829), 665.

¹²⁹ Gal. III 27, 28.